

City of Morgantown Arts & Cultural Development Department
CALL FOR ARTISTS
RFQ with Letter of Interest

Project: Commission and installation of an outdoor mural public artwork installation on the Westover Bridge Pier in Morgantown, WV.

Budget: \$10,000 (all-inclusive)

Call Issued: August 16, 2021

Entries Due: OCTOBER 1, 2021

Project description:

City of Morgantown Arts & Cultural Development Department is seeking to commission an artist and/or artist's team to create a site-specific mural public artwork installation on the Westover Bridge Pier located adjacent to the Walnut Street Landing and the Hazel Ruby McQuain Park at the riverfront in downtown Morgantown. The artwork will be the latest large-scale mural project of the Department of Arts & Cultural Development.

Community context:

Morgantown, West Virginia located in North Central West Virginia is home to West Virginia University. Founded in 1867, West Virginia University has a long and rich history as a land-grant university. In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, offering land grants of 30,000 acres of federally owned land to each state that agreed to establish a college to teach agriculture and the "mechanic arts" (engineering). The State of West Virginia was formed the following year and, shortly thereafter, the state's legislature accepted the terms for the Morrill Act to raise the money to start the new land-grant college they called the Agricultural College of West Virginia. Population for Morgantown, according to the 2019 census is 30,712 with an additional population nine months out of the year of 28-30,000 students.

The City of Morgantown has collaborated with Main Street Morgantown and downtown property owners on a few mural projects to bring arts to the downtown historic district. Most recently they completed installation of three murals and six utility box murals commissioned by local artists with approval from the State of West Virginia Department of Highways. Community murals and other arts initiatives encourage a sense of excitement among the citizens and promote reinvestment in downtown. Murals make our community more inviting and beautiful! They add color to building walls and streets that would otherwise go unnoticed, be tagged with graffiti or otherwise be unsightly. The addition of this mural is designed to continue the investment in the redevelopment of our riverfront area and serve as an important addition to the Hazel Ruby McQuain Park redevelopment and the city's efforts to support public art.

Background:

The Department of Arts & Cultural Development will collaborate with the City of Morgantown, Morgantown Cultural Arts Commission, artists, and members of the community to award the commission. Morgantown has a long and celebrated history as a city that embraces and supports arts, culture, and history throughout the entire fabric of the community. The City of Morgantown recognizes the importance of arts and culture in economic and tourism development, quality of life, educational opportunity, and civic involvement.

In 2020, the City of Morgantown created the Department of Arts and Cultural Development to oversee, mobilize and support cultural resources on behalf of the entire community. Also, in 2020, the Morgantown City Council identified Arts and Culture as a strategic goal of the city.

The Arts and Cultural Development Department strives to enhance the vitality of Morgantown and the quality of life for all residents by supporting an environment where arts and cultural organizations thrive, artists and culture bearers are celebrated and supported, and people of all ages enjoy opportunities for expression and experiencing the arts.

The Department of Arts and Cultural Development promotes the value of arts and culture and works to ensure that a wide range of high-quality artistic experiences are available to everyone. We encourage artist-friendly arts and cultural policy and oversee City owned cultural facilities.

From the historic Metropolitan Theatre to the newly renovated Ruby Amphitheatre at Hazel Ruby McQuain Park, to the Morgantown History Museum, the City of Morgantown supports cultural programs and services of all kinds and for people of all ages.

Goals of the Morgantown Mural program:

The City of Morgantown wishes to support public art and murals to contribute to our quality of life, economic and tourism development, and to promote arts, culture, and history in nurturing the creative spirit and identity of Morgantown and the region. We respect and honor the diversity and history of our community in all its many facets, and we seek to provide access to a variety of artistic disciplines and practices that can appeal to this diverse constituency.

When works are located in public spaces where official City business or community activity is taking place, the public encounters them randomly and individuals do not have a choice of seeing or not seeing the work. The City is not, and should not be considered, an art gallery or art museum and in determining the location of a project, the department shall site projects in a way that takes into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the public. While the City actively supports the presentation of creative and challenging work, it also understands that these works must be presented with care and consideration.

Site Description:

The site-specific public artwork installation will be installed at Westover Bridge Pier located between the Walnut Street Landing and Hazel Ruby McQuain Park, 185 Garret Street, Morgantown, WV 26508. The area is located along the riverfront in the heart of the downtown wharf district and will serve as a major addition to the ongoing development and activation of the Hazel Ruby McQuain Park, Ruby Amphitheater, and Walnut Street Landing.

The bridge pier is approximately 25' high by 50' wide at the top and estimated at 930 sq ft per side. (please see images). The proposed artwork must include both sides of the pier (all sides).



Fig. 1 - Westover Bridge Pier 1 - River Side, Approx. 860 ft²



Fig. 2 - Westover Bridge Pier 1 - Trail Side, Approx. 830 ft²

The city will investigate painting the retaining wall adjacent to the project in a complimentary color after the artwork is completed.



Fig. 3 - Westover Bridge Abutment 1 - Morgantown Side, Approx. 1325 ft²

Total Square footage:

Pier, River side: 860 ft²

Pier, Trail side: 830 ft²

Pier sides: 160 per side - 320 ft²

Abutment: 1325 ft²

Budget:

The budget for the commissioned project, which will be dedicated in spring 2022, is \$10,000, all-inclusive. The fee will include, but is not limited to artists/design fee, materials, installation, transportation, insurance, project documentation, travel, site modification, per diem expenses and contingency to cover unexpected expenses.

Artist Eligibility:

The call is open to all professional artists who are U.S. citizens and live and work in the United States. Artist teams will be considered, but only a single artist 'project manager' will be contracted. The artist's services will include design of an original artwork, management of installation of the work, and availability for a public reception, media interviews and other promotional opportunities.

The DACD plays a collaborative role with the public and its various constituencies – nonprofit arts organizations, artists, businesses, and developers. Since art is not an exact science, nor does it have specific local, state, or federal guidelines or requirements as might be applicable in other fields, it is important to understand that the development of an artwork is a process in which the DACD must weigh community interests alongside the artist's aesthetic considerations.

The collaborative process is an important one, as public art works do not exist in a vacuum, but in a larger community context. The artwork becomes a reflection of the community in which it is presented. A willingness to explore direction and outcome of the creation in a collaborative process will result in a project that is successful for both the artist and the community in which it exists. Candidates are invited to submit a statement on community engagement in their application.

The City of Morgantown and the Department of Arts & Cultural Development is committed to equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in all programs and services and does not discriminate on the basis of race/ethnicity, color, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status. The Arts & Cultural Development Department's established policy is to provide equal employment, advancement and other opportunities to all individuals based on merit, qualifications, and abilities.

Application Materials / Checklist:

Applications may be submitted digitally, free of charge via email, google docs, or drop box to vkitch@morgantownwv.gov.

Submitted material will consist of:

- Samples of Work - Six digital images (jpeg format preferred)
- Caption sheet identifying each image by title of artwork, medium, dimensions, dates, price (if applicable) and location. Image file names must correspond to the caption sheet.
- Resume / CV
- Three references (including full names, titles, affiliations, and contact information)
- Letter of interest (1-3 pages). Preference will be given to an expanded artist statement relating to this specific project.
- Statement on community engagement (encouraged)
- Preliminary design ideas or concepts related to this specific project (optional)
- Up to three selections of representative printed materials, such as catalogues or news articles (optional).

Deadline:

Applications must be submitted by **OCTOBER 1, 2021**.

Selection Process:

Selection of three finalists will be determined by a public art advisory committee consisting of a combination of the following:

- Member of Cultural Arts Commission
- Members of the community
- Artist(s)
- Public art expert(s)
- City staff

Incomplete application materials or artists who do not meet eligibility requirements will not be considered for finalist selection. A stipend of \$250 will be provided to each finalist for design, development of proposal, creation of presentation, and preparation of maintenance guidelines.

Criteria:

- Artwork must be the original work of the artist(s) without any historic, current, or future replications or editions.
- The artwork must be durable, low maintenance, appropriate for a pedestrian environment and able to withstand year-round Morgantown outdoor weather conditions.
- Creative license with diverse interpretations, including abstract focus, will be considered.
- Artist's qualifications and experience.
- Aesthetics – the artist's consideration of the context of the artwork in relation to the proposed site

Project Timeline:

September 2021:	Call is issued
October 1, 2021:	Application deadline
October 2021:	Finalists selected by committee review
November 10, 2021:	Finalists approved by Cultural Arts Commission
Nov-Dec 2021:	Finalists create designs
February 2022:	Artist and design selected
	Artist and commission announced
	Contract executed
Spring 2022:	Artwork installed, public dedication/reception

Questions:

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